



# **Tips for**

## **Grandparents *who are* Raising Grandchildren in Illinois**

These simple suggestions have been developed by the Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Illinois to assist older adult caregivers in their efforts to provide quality care for their family's children. The Task Force can be reached through the Illinois Department on Aging's toll-free Senior HelpLine, **1-800-252-8966** (Voice and TTY).

### **EXTENDED FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM**

The Extended Family Support is a statewide program that provides short term support and services to individuals who are caring for related child(ren) outside of the formal child welfare system.

**This intensive, short term support program affords children an opportunity to live with family members instead of becoming part of the formal child welfare system. For caregivers who unexpectedly assume responsibility for related children, the program offers the following:**

- Advocacy
- Resources
- Service Referrals

Many caregivers are unexpectedly left with children. They may need hard service such as: beds, clothing, groceries and assistance relocating. The caregivers nearly always require emotional support and referrals for specialized services.

#### **What services are provided?**

A family receives assistance from a caseworker for **three (3) months**. The caseworker will assist the family by identifying the needs that must be met in order for the child(ren) to have a stable living arrangement. The caseworker helps meet these needs by:

- Assisting in obtaining Child Only Grants
- Assisting in obtaining private guardianship
- Accessing limited funding per family for bedding, food, uniforms, and/or other appropriate services that will assist in stabilizing the child(ren)'s living arrangement until on-going financial assistance is obtained.

## **Who is eligible?**

Any relative who is acting as the primary caregiver for a child that is not their biological child and meets the following criteria:

1. The child has been living with the relative caregiver **15** days or more.
2. The caregiver meets the Department of Children and Family Services definition of a 'relative'.
3. The family has service needs which exceed cash assistance.
4. **The child does not have protective needs.**
5. **The family does not have an open or pending case with the Department of Children and Family Services.**
6. The caregiver is providing the majority of the caregiving responsibilities.

## **How do caregivers get referred into the program?**

Caregivers can call the **Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-2873** and ask to be referred to the Extended Family Support Program in their area. The relative must be the primary caregiver for the child and must meet the above criteria.

**Or call the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine:**

**1-800-252-8966 (Voice and TTY).**